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CFAC Officials Oppose Superfund Listing

CFAC officials said they have approached the Environmental Protection Agency for discussions on site review

BY BEACON STAFF // DEC 22, 2014 // LATEST HEADLINES, NEWS & FEATURES

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The Columbia Falls Aluminum Company, which is owned by Glencore, favors a speedy and thorough investigation of the shuttered plant site but opposes listing it as a Superfund site, officials announced last week.

CFAC officials said they have approached the Environmental Protection Agency about discussions to proceed with an investigation of the former aluminum plant. The company has hired an environmental consulting firm, Roux Associates, to develop a "remedial investigation work plan," according to officials.

"While we understand the interest that some in the community and at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) have in gaining access to federal cleanup funds, we believe listing on the NPL and designating the site as a Superfund site will unnecessarily delay the entire effort and become a detriment to economic development in the Flathead," the company said in a statement.

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"Besides the lengthy time frame associated with NPL listing, Superfund stigmatizes

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properties, inhibiting potential developers and thus limiting economic growth potential.”

The company claims listing the site on the National Priorities List, which would pre-empt Superfund status, “is not likely to result in an efficient assessment or cleanup,” citing other current and past Superfund sites in the state.

“None of the 18 Superfund sites in Montana has ever been removed from the list: in other words, no project has ever been fully completed. We believe it is in the best interest of everyone – MDEQ, EPA, CFAC, Columbia Falls, the Flathead and the people of Montana – to address the site without listing on the NPL and to do the investigation and analysis as expeditiously as possible,” company officials said.

Recent reports from MDEQ and EPA have shown the site is eligible for Superfund status, but the site’s owner, Glencore, a Swiss commodities firm, has never explained what it intends to do with the property.

The community of Columbia Falls has expressed concerns regarding the toxic materials buried at the site, and at a recent town hall meeting residents said they would like the site cleaned up so that it can be revitalized for other uses.

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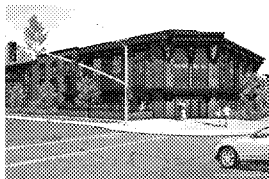
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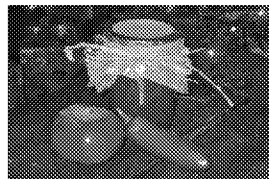
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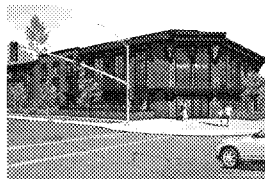




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